SOFTSKILLS

Everyone has personal, financial, or professional goals they either need or want to accomplish, but these goals can remain elusive unless there is a clear plan of action to reach them. When it comes to setting goals, planning action steps, and tracking progress, there are a few options for organizing the process, including detailed planning worksheets, online tools, traditional calendars, and good old pen and paper.

WHAT IS A GOAL?

A goal is generally defined as something that an individual or group is trying to achieve. People often set goals within a specific time frame so there is a deadline for completion. Both short- and long-term goals may need to be broken down into a set of tasks — doing so essentially turns one goal into several mini-goals. These tasks, or action steps designed to work toward a larger goal, are often referred to as *objectives*.

WHAT IS AN OBJECTIVE?

Objectives are measurable and specific actions that can be taken to achieve an end result. They are often planned and carried out on a shorter-term basis and may be designed to help an individual, group, or organization reach a broader, long-term goal.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOAL AND AN OBJECTIVE?

The terms *goal* and *objective* are often used interchangeably and both refer to an aim or desired outcome that a person or group hopes to accomplish. However, goals often point to a larger purpose, a long-term vision, or a less tangible result, whereas objectives tend to be time-limited, measurable actions with tangible outcomes that help push progress toward broader goals.

WHAT ARE S.M.A.R.T. GOALS?

The S.M.A.R.T. approach to handling goals came out of the corporate world in the early 1980s. It describes a method for setting and working toward goals, and the acronym stands for the following:

- Specific: Clearly define goals as succinctly as possible.
- Measurable: Identify metrics for measuring progress and success.
- Achievable: Set realistic goals that can be completed within specific parameters.
- Relevant: Ensure that goals are worth pursuing.
- Time-Bound: Assign deadlines to goals and related action steps.

Using the S.M.A.R.T. framework for managing goals and objectives can help you examine the motivation behind pursuing a certain goal. It can also help you determine what resources will be required to reach that goal. The S.M.A.R.T. guidelines break down the goal planning process into clear steps so that vital questions can be answered efficiently. What exactly needs to be

accomplished? How will you know when your goal has been reached? What is the timeline, and who is responsible for the different actions required to reach the goal?

S.M.A.R.T. goals may be especially useful when dealing with complex goals that need to be broken down into multiple, actionable steps that you delegate to various team members and track over time. This framework can also be combined with other strategic planning by analyzing strengths and weaknesses, identifying internal and external resources, and evaluating risk. Planning for potential problems and tracking metrics closely can help reduce risk, keep progress on track, and increase the chances of reaching a goal by the desired completion date.

TIPS FOR SETTING (AND REACHING) ATTAINABLE GOALS
Here are a few tips to keep in mind as you set goals and create plans for reaching them:

Start small and build on success: Whether you're aiming to retire by a certain age, lose 50 pounds, or grow business profits over a five-year period, create a plan that starts with steps you can take now. Add benchmarks down the road so you have clear short-term steps to reach your ultimate goal — doing so provides a manageable ladder for you to climb and gives you ongoing gratification as you reach each objective leading to the end goal.

Focus on the Most Important Goal: Dealing with the goals of a complex organization, long-term project, or even an individual life can feel overwhelming. In any situation, identify the most important goal — this will help you create an effective plan of action and prioritize other goals.
Consider Both Lead and Lag Measures: Measuring key indicators is vital to tracking the progress and effectiveness of business endeavors. Leading and lagging indicators are both important measures of success, but each provides different information. Simply put, lead measures are drivers that can help you achieve a goal, while lag measures are outcomes; the former is predictive, while the latter provides information about a completed process. Lagging indicators offer measurable results that can be used to analyze progress. However, when planning business goals, it is vital to consider the leading indicators that may improve those outcomes.

Keep Goals in a Visible Place: This is a simple tip that can go a long way toward maintaining focus and tracking progress. It could mean keeping files easily accessible, so updates are shared among stakeholders. Or, it could simply mean posting a printed sheet in your home office as a reminder of high-priority tasks that need to be completed or long-term goals that you are working toward.

Consider Accountability as a Form of Motivation: Goals for work projects may have an accountability built in via deadlines and performance reviews. But, when undertaking personal goals, it may help to choose an accountability partner or let friends and family know what goal you are working toward.

SWOT Analysis

You are most likely to succeed in life if you use your talents to their fullest extent. Similarly, you'll suffer fewer problems if you know what your weaknesses are, and if you manage these weaknesses so that they don't matter in the work you do.

SWOT Analysis is a useful technique for understanding your Strengths and Weaknesses, and for identifying both the Opportunities open to you and the Threats you face.
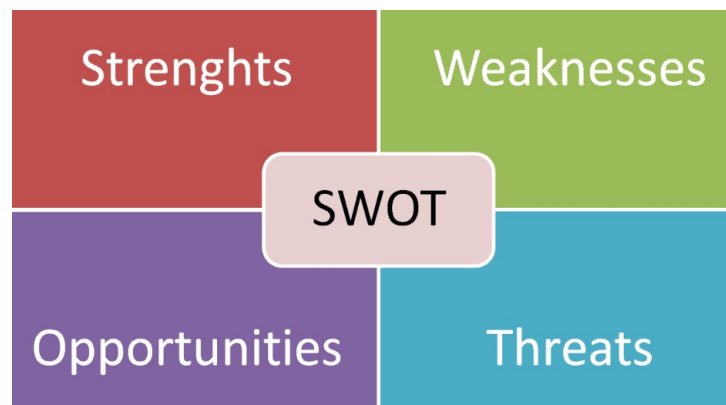
Strengths

- What advantages do you have that others don't have (for example, skills, certifications, education, or connections)?

- What do you do better than anyone else?

- What personal resources can you access?

- What do other people (and your boss, in particular) see as your strengths?

- Which of your achievements are you most proud of?

- What values do you believe in that others fail to exhibit?

- Are you part of a network that no one else is involved in? If so, what connections do you have with influential people?

Weaknesses

- What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them?

- What will the people around you see as your weaknesses?

- Are you completely confident in your education and skills training? If not, where are you weakest?

- What are your negative work habits (for example, are you often late, are you disorganized, do you have a short temper, or are you poor at handling stress)?

- Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field? For instance, if you have to conduct meetings on a regular basis, a fear of public speaking would be a major weakness.

Opportunities

- What new technology can help you? Or can you get help from others or from people via the Internet?

- Is your industry growing? If so, how can you take advantage of the current market?

- Do you have a network of strategic contacts to help you, or offer good advice?

- What trends (management or otherwise) do you see in your company, and how can you take advantage of them?

- Are any of your competitors failing to do something important? If so, can you take advantage of their mistakes?

- Is there a need in your company or industry that no one is filling?

- Do your customers or vendors complain about something in your company? If so, could you create an opportunity by offering a solution?

  You might find useful opportunities in the following:

- Networking events, educational classes, or conferences.

- A colleague going on an extended leave. Could you take on some of this person's projects to gain experience?

- A new role or project that forces you to learn new skills, like public speaking or international relations.

- A company expansion or acquisition. Do you have specific skills (like a second language) that could help with the process?

Threats

- What obstacles do you currently face at work?

- Are any of your colleagues competing with you for projects or roles?

- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?

- Does changing technology threaten your position?

- Could any of your weaknesses lead to threats?

<u>Tips to improve your Communication Skills</u>

Effective communication is one of the most important life skills we can learn—yet one we don't usually put a lot of effort into. Whether you want to have better conversations in your social life or get your ideas across better at work, here are some essential tips for learning to to communicate more effectively.

10. Watch Your Body Language

You tell your partner you're open to discussion but your arms are crossed; say you're listening but haven't looked up from your phone yet. Our non-verbal and non-written cues often reveal more than we think they do. Whether it's <u>how you make eye contact</u> or <u>how you hold yourself during a video interview</u>, don't forget that you're constantly communicating even when you're not saying a word. One strange way to tap into your body for better communication? <u>Think about your toes</u>. Or <u>adopt a power pose</u> if you need to boost your confidence before a big talk. Or learn <u>how to read other people's body language</u> so you can respond appropriately.

9. Get Rid of Unnecessary Conversation Fillers

Um's and ah's do little to improve your speech or everyday conversations. Cut them out <u>to be more persuasive</u> and feel or appear more confident. One way is to start <u>keeping track</u> of when you say words like "um" or "like." You could also try <u>taking your hands out of your pockets</u> or simply <u>relaxing and pausing before you speak</u>. Those silences seem more awkward to you than they do to others, trust us.

8. Have a Script for Small Talk and Other Occasions

Small talk is an art that not many people have mastered. For the inevitable, awkward silences with people you hardly know, it helps to <u>have a plan</u>. The <u>FORD</u> (family, occupation, recreation dreams) method might help you come up with topics to discuss, and you can also <u>turn small talk into conversation</u> by sharing information that could help you and the other person find common ground. Hey, all that small talk <u>could make you happier</u> in the long run.

7. Tell a Story

Stories are powerful. They <u>activate our brains</u>, make presentations <u>suck less</u>, make us <u>more persuasive</u>, and can even <u>help us ace interviews</u>. Learn the secrets of becoming a phenomenal storyteller with <u>these rules from Pixar</u> or by simply <u>using the word "but"</u> more to structure your narrative. Everyone's got at least one great story in them.

6. Ask Questions and Repeat the Other Person

Let's face it, we've all drifted off when someone else was talking or misheard the other person. Asking questions and <u>repeating the other person's last few words</u> shows you're interested in what they say, keeps you on your toes, and helps clarify points that could be misunderstood (e.g., "So to recap, you're going to buy the tickets for Saturday?").

It also helps for small talk and to fill in awkward silences. Instead of trying to stir up conversation on mundane topics like the weather, ask the other person questions (e.g., "Got any plans for the summer?" or "What are you reading lately?") and engage in their answers. It's more important to be interested than to be interesting.

5. Put Away the Distractions

It's pretty rude to use your phone while someone's talking to you or you're supposed to be hanging out with them. Maybe we can't get rid of all our distractions or put away technology completely, but just taking the time to look up could vastly improve our communication with each other.

4. Tailor Your Message to Your Audience

The best communicators adjust how they talk based on whom they're speaking to; you'd probably use a different style of communication with co-workers or your boss compared to when you're speaking with your significant other, kids, or elders. Always try to keep the other person's perspective in mind when you try to get your message across.

3. Be Brief Yet Specific

There's actually a BRIEF acronym—Background, Reason, Information, End, Follow-up—to help you keep your emails short without leaving anything out. It's a good policy for both writtena nd verbal communication (I've always felt that my job as a writer was to clearly get the point across and then get off the page as soon as possible. Just two more items on this list!) Clear and concise are two of the 7 Cs of communication, along with concrete, correct, coherent, complete, and courteous.

2. Up Your Empathy

Communication is a two-way street. If you practice taking the opposing viewpoint, you can reduce the difficulty and anxiety that sometimes arises when trying to truly communicate with others. (For example, knowing what your significant other *really* means when she says she's too tired to talk.) Developing empathy helps you better understand even the unspoken parts of your communication with others, and helps you respond more effectively.

1. Listen, *Really* Listen

Finally, going hand-in-hand with most of the points above, the best thing you can do to improve your communication skills is to learn to really listen—to pay attention and let the other person talk without interrupting. It's hard work, we know, but "A good conversation is a bunch of words elegantly connected with listening." Then, even if your communication styles don't match, at least you're both working off the same page. And hopefully the other person will be attentively listening to you too.

Telephone Etiquettes

The telephone is perhaps one of the most helpful inventions of the eighteenth century. Though technology has advanced over the years, making way for e-mails and chats; for most of us, telephonic communication continues to be the most convenient way of making a conversation. However, when you're speaking over the phone, there are certain barriers that come in the way which also need to be taken into consideration.

Let us look at 10 tips that will help you communicate better over the phone:

1. Greeting
Just like a face to face conversation, the other party in the telephonic conversation expects you to open the conversation with a nice greeting. It is suggested that you begin the phone call with an appropriate greeting like Good morning/Afternoon depending on which time of the day you are calling. Do not answer by using words such as "yeah" or "yes."

2. Take permission and be polite
A polite word or two always helps in bringing warmth into the conversation. While it is very important to take permission to speak to the person you have intended to call, one should always remember to use a polite tone.
Use phrase like "May I please speak with_____".
Remember to be sensitive to the tone of your voice.
Do not sound overly aggressive or pushy.
It is important your tone conveys authority and confidence.
Do not lean back in your chair when speaking on the telephone.
Try to record your own conversations. You will then hear how your sound to others.

3. Identify self and the organisation
The most common mistake that people make during a phone is call not identifying oneself.
It is considered inappropriate and can also lead to miscommunication, always introduce yourself before getting into any conversation; telephonic or face to face -- that's the thumb rule!

4. Clarity
The good old 7Cs of communication will always have an impact on how you converse with people, very important to remember and include the first "C" i.e being clear.
Do not use broken phrases.
Always use a clear, crisp and simple language.

5. Purpose of the call
Before making a phone call, be sure of the purpose of the call.
Think through exactly what you plan to say and practice before you place the call.
Jotting down the items you want to discuss and questions you want answered can help in making a smooth conversation

6. Know your timeline and keep it short
While speaking on phone, you are not in front of the other party; hence it is very important to ask if the receiver has enough time to speak to you.

Respect the person's time and ensure that the conversation gets completed within the given timeline.

7. Avoid fillers and keep it interesting
Filler words -- like um and uh -- are never written into a speech, and add nothing when a speaker utters them.
During a telephonic conversation, a filler word sends a signal to the other person which says "I'm still thinking, and I'm not willing to pass the conversation back to you just yet."
This only conveys that you are confused and still thinking of what to say next.

8. Smile through the phone
Keep a 'smile in your voice.'
Sound upbeat and enthusiastic about the chance to speak with the caller.
Adults pay more attention to the tone of your voice than they do to the words you use.

9. Find some quiet place
Communicating over the telephone is much more effective when both parties can hear each other clearly without background noise.
Plan to make your call, whether it's for work or just to catch up with an old friend, at a time in which you are not required to attend to any other business and ensure that there is no disturbance around.
Blaring noises, such as the television or road traffic can interfere with both your listening and communication skills, making it difficult for a conversation.

10. Summarise, paraphrase and close
There are various benefits of summarising and paraphrasing, it helps you to reaffirm what was discussed during the phone call.
So if there is any information which needs to be changed or altered, the other party has an opportunity to add on.
Always end the call with a pleasantry like -- "It was pleasure speaking with you" or "You have a nice day."

Time Management Tips
"Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein."

A lot of folks in our society try to be hyper-productive.

You know — the people who scurry from task to task, always checking e-mail, organizing something, making a call, running an errand, etc.

The people who do this often subscribe to the idea that "staying busy" means you're working hard and are going to be more successful.

While this belief may be true to an extent, it often leads to mindless "productivity" — a constant need to do something and a tendency to waste time on menial tasks.

Instead of behaving in this way, I choose to do things differently.

Working Smarter, Not Harder

The old adage, "work smarter, not harder" has become a staple in the way I go about work of any kind.

Instead of being robotic in how I approach tasks, I try to be thoughtful and always ask myself if something can be done more efficiently or eliminated altogether.

Managing my time isn't about squeezing as many tasks into my day as possible. It's about simplifying how I work, doing things faster, and relieving stress.

It's about clearing away space in my life to make time for people, play, and rest.

I promise you — there really *are* enough hours in a day for everything you'd like to do, but it may take a bit of rearranging and re-imagining to find them.

21 Time Management Tips

Remember: There are innumerable hacks and tricks to manage your time effectively. These are some tips that I find helpful, but everyone is different.

Let this list be a catalyst to get you thinking regularly about how to refine your own practices.

1. Complete most important tasks first.

This is the golden rule of time management. Each day, identify the two or three tasks that are the *most crucial* to complete, and do those first.
Once you're done, the day has already been a success. You can move on to other things, or you can let them wait until tomorrow. You've finished the essential.

2. Learn to say "no".

Making a lot of time commitments can teach us how to juggle various engagements and manage our time. This can be a great thing.

However, you can easily take it too far. At some point, you need to learn to decline opportunities. Your objective should be to take on only those commitments that you *know* you have time for and that you *truly care* about.

3. Sleep at least 7-8 hours.

Some people think sacrificing sleep is a good way to hack productivity and wring a couple extra hours out of the day. This is not the case.

Most people need 7-8 hours of sleep for their bodies and minds to function optimally. You know if you're getting enough. Listen to your body, and don't underestimate the value of sleep.

4. Devote your entire focus to the task at hand.

Close out all other browser windows. Put your phone *away*, out of sight and on silent. Find a quiet place to work, or listen to some music if that helps you (I enjoy listening to classical or ambient music while writing sometimes).
Concentrate on this one task. Nothing else should exist. Immerse yourself in it.

5. Get an early start.

Nearly all of us are plagued by the impulse to procrastinate. It seems so easy, and you always manage to get it done eventually, so why not?

Take it from a recovering chronic procrastinator — it's so much nicer and less stressful to get an earlier start on something. It isn't that difficult either, if you just *decide firmly* to do it.
6. Don't allow unimportant details to drag you down.

We often allow projects to take much, much longer than they could by getting too hung up on small details. I'm guilty of this. I've always been a perfectionist.

What I've found, though, is that it is possible to push past the desire to constantly examine what I've done so far. I'm much better off pressing onward, getting the bulk completed, and revising things afterward.

7. Turn key tasks into habits.

Writing is a regular task for me. I have to write all the time — for school, work, my student organization, my blog, etc. I probably write 5,000 – 7,000 words per week.

8. Be conscientious of amount of TV/Internet/gaming time.

Time spent browsing Twitter or gaming or watching TV and movies can be one of the biggest drains on productivity.

I suggest becoming more aware of how much time you spend on these activities. Simply by noticing how they're sucking up your time you'll begin to do them less.

9. Delineate a time limit in which to complete task.

Instead of just sitting down to work on a project and thinking, "I'm going to be here until this is done," try thinking, "I'm going to work on this for three hours".

The time constraint will push you to focus and be more efficient, even if you end up having to go back and add a bit more later.

10. Leave a buffer-time between tasks.

When we rush from task to task, it's difficult to appreciate what we're doing and to stay focused and motivated.

Allowing ourselves down-time between tasks can be a breath of fresh air for our brains. While taking a break, go for a short walk, meditate, or perform some other mind-clearing exercise.

11. Don't think of the totality of your to-do list.

One of the fastest ways to overwhelm yourself is to think about your massive to-do list. Realize that no amount of thought will make it any shorter.

At this point in time, all you can do is focus on the one task before you. This one, single, solitary task. One step at a time. Breathe.

12. Exercise and eat healthily.

Numerous studies have linked a healthy lifestyle with work productivity. Similar to getting enough sleep, exercising and eating healthily boost energy levels, clear your mind, and allow you to focus more easily.

13. <u>Do less</u>.

This is a tactic recommended by one of my favorite bloggers, Leo Babauta. Basically, do less is another way of saying do the things that really matter.
Slow down, notice what needs to be done, and concentrate on those things. Do *less* things that create *more* value, rather than *more* things that are mostly empty.

14. Utilize weekends, just a little bit.

One of my favorite memes depicts a gentleman casting his work aside, declaring, "It's Friday! F#%$88u this shit." The following image reads "Monday", and the man is stooping to pick up the papers he'd tossed to the ground.
This is comical, but I've found that it's amazing how doing *just a little bit* on weekends can really lessen the workload during the week. Aim for 2-4 hours per day. You'll still leave yourself plenty of free time for activities.

15. Create organizing systems.

Being organized saves tons of time, and you don't have to be the most ultra-organized person in the world either. Systems aren't complicated to implement.

Create a filing system for documents. Make sure all items have a place to be stored in your dwelling. Unsubscribe from e-mail lists if you don't want to receive their content. Streamline, streamline, streamline.

16. Do something during waiting time.

We tend to have a lot of down-time where we don't try to do much. Waiting rooms, lines at the store, time on the subway, on the elliptical at the gym, etc.

Find things to do during this time. I tend to have a lot of reading for classes, so I bring some of it almost everywhere I go and read during waiting time.

17. Lock yourself in.

No distractions, no excuses. Sometimes, the only way I'm going to get something done is if I'm under lock and key, alone in a room. If you're like me, realize it, and act accordingly.

18. Commit to your plan to do something.

I kind of mentioned this already, but it's worth repeating. **Don't flake on your own plan to do something!**
Be resolute. Be committed. Be *professional* about it, and follow through. A firm will to accomplish what you decide to accomplish will take you anywhere.

19. Batch related tasks together.

Let's say that over a given weekend you need to do two programming assignments, write three essays, and make two videos. Rather than approaching this work in whatever order you feel, group the like tasks and do them consecutively.

Different tasks demand different types of thinking, so it makes sense to allow your mind to continue to flow with its current zone rather than switching unnecessarily to something that's going to require you to re-orient.

20. Find time for stillness.

In our go, go, go world, too many people don't find time to just be still. Yet, it's extraordinary what a stillness practice can do. Action and inaction should both play key roles in our lives.

Discovering time in your life for silence and non-motion reduces anxiety and shows you that there is no need to constantly rush. It also makes it easier to find your work pleasurable.

21. Eliminate the non-essential.

I know this one has been mentioned in one capacity or another already, but it's one of the most useful tips you can take away from this post.

Our lives are full of excess. When we can identify that excess and remove it, we become more and more in touch with what *is* significant and what *deserves* our time.

One Last Tip (The Best One)

There's one final tip I want to mention. If you remember one thing from this post, remember this:

Enjoyment should always be the goal. Work can be play.

We get so caught up in busyness that we forget to *enjoy* what we're doing. Even when we focus on working smarter, we're still often too focused on getting things done.

This should *never* be the point. Always ask yourself: What can I do to spend more time *enjoying* what I'm doing?

The goal should be to arrange your commitments in a way that you're *happy living out the details* of your daily life, *even* while you're working.

This may sound like a pipe dream, but it's more possible than ever in today's world. Be curious. Be open to opportunity. Know yourself. Embrace your passions.

Latest trends in IT sector

Nearly 60 years ago, Gordon Moore, the co-founder of Intel, coined "Moore's Law," a prediction that would set the pace for the digital revolution. The law stated that computing abilities, over time, would radically increase in power while decreasing in relative cost, all at an exponential rate.

This insight, along with the hard work of many computer scientists and engineers, has fueled the rapid growth of the technology sector. The industry has quickly become a staple component of our modern economy.

The five biggest technology companies (Apple, Alphabet, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft) together made up a whopping 37 percent of the S&P 500's total gains in 2017. Federal investments in the digital sector could reach up to $95 billion in the coming year. And, internationally, the public will spend up to $3.4 trillion on digital services by 2020.

Consumers and enterprises have a lot of potential to look forward to, as frontier technologies finally become affordable enough to service the mass markets.

So, what exactly will 2018 have in store? Here are eight tech trends to keep your eye on:

1. Blockchain

By now, you have probably heard a thing or two about the promise of blockchain and Bitcoin. At a high level, blockchain technology is a way of securely managing access and information. The core of blockchain hinges on the idea of decentralization, which essentially distributes power and risk equitably across players in a network.

Blockchain startups are finding niche and clever ways to optimize industries, by replacing intermediary parties (brokers, agents, etc.) with smart contracts that automatically verify actions without compromising data security. Platforms like Gameflip and Filecoin are able to solve fundamental marketplace challenges, worth billions of dollars, which have been terrorizing ecosystems for decades.

Other companies, like SparkleCoin, are driving blockchain adoption at scale by empowering everyday consumers to purchase real-world products and services from the world's largest online retailers using cryptocurrencies.

2. Internet of things

BI Intelligence's report on the "internet of things" notes that nearly $6 trillion will be spent on IoT solutions in the next five years alone. This deluge of investment has turned this once science-fictional notion into reality.

Already, many of us wake up in our "smart beds" to a Bluetooth-connected alarm clock that communicates with our wifi-enabled speakers. Soon all of our devices -- microwaves, washing machines and even bird feeders -- will be connected to the web. With geospatial

data from all of our devices, tech-savvy companies will be able to optimize and automate systems, eradicating inefficiencies caused by human error.

3. Virtual reality

Is 2018 the long-awaited year that virtual reality goes mainstream? While the technology is still evolving, and while players like Oculus and HTC continue to iterate on their consoles, things look promising for the industry as VR platforms begin to appeal to the masses.

One of the biggest obstacles to virtual reality achieving true scale is the creation of enough content to attract a wide swath of consumers. As the industry has learned, onboarding hard-core gamers will not be enough to sustain a long-term effort.

Beyond gaming, there a number of virtual-reality startups that are building high-value-add services specifically for enterprises.

4. Augmented reality

The rise of Pokémon in 2016 was just the first of many implementations of augmented reality that will make a massive impact on society. Apple and Google recently introduced both ARKit and ARCore and are driving an inflection point for the industry. As hardware and software continue to improve, we can expect to see more developers building AR applications in 2018.

It's not just startups looking to get in on the action. In fact, it is likely that many of the world's biggest brands will invest their resources into creating augmented-reality experiences to enhance their users' experiences both inside and outside of their stores.

5. Chatbots

Enterprise applications of messaging bots seem poised to have a tangible impact on the software space, as more companies invest in developing their own consumer-facing bots. Chatbots, at the most simplistic level, are front-end interfaces for companies to communicate with their customers. More advanced bots leverage artificial intelligence to provide enriching and interactive user experiences.

Companies can embed these bots on their home pages, or they can rely on native platforms like Facebook and Slack for distribution. Expect to see companies across all industries, including hospitality, dining and travel, create bots for customer support, sales and marketing services.

6. Subscription model

The days of "pay-per-use" costing are long gone, and are likely not coming back anytime soon, as most companies are switching to recurring revenue models. Already, you can order your clothing, groceries and cleaning supplies to be delivered directly to your doorstep on a weekly or monthly basis.

And the model is being applied more widely than just to physical goods: Most internet companies are operating under a "software as a service" model, where you pay a monthly fee on a recurring cycle for a service.

We can expect to see startups expand their subscription businesses into more verticals, and to start specializing.

7. Ecommerce

Next year, 2018, may finally be the year ecommerce overtakes retail once and for all. In a report on online retail, Forrester stated that 83 percent of U.S. adults purchased something on Amazon this past year. As this number grows, and digital storefronts become a more convenient and attractive option for consumers, we can expect to see ecommerce begin to take bigger slices of the retail pie.

It will be interesting to see which incumbents are able to establish a large enough digital presence to protect themselves from this disruption.

8. Automation

Artificial intelligence and machines will soon become ubiquitous in the professional world. From virtual assistants, to manual labor,to intermediary services, many jobs will likely be disrupted in the coming years. Though humans are indispensable in certain fields, there are many points of optimization that we can fully automate with embedded technology.

Machine intelligence has the potential to fundamentally shift worker demand and displace millions of jobs. Where will everyone go when machines can do our work for us? This question, among others, will be important considerations getting our rapt attention in 2018.

Internship

Internship is a temporary position obtained by a **college student**(generally) at the work location(company or organization) which may or may not be paid for a duration of time.

Why Internships are important?

1. It gives you first-hand exposure of working in a company
2. It gives you an opportunity to learn more about your goals and expectations in your field of study
3. It helps you to build a healthy network of professionals which will help you in longer run
4. It helps to develop your resume and gives a belief to companies(during interview) that you could be a great asset to their company
5. It helps in your transition from working part-time to full-time job.

Note: Sometimes, companies hire their Interns if they are impressed by the work.

Preparation before applying for Internship:

1. Have a clarity on the specifics of the type of internship.
2. Learn the art of writing resume and build a resume for yourself.
3. Make profiles on LinkedIn, Branchout, AngelList, Zerply, MeetUp and VisualCV to develop a professional presence online.
4. Use your available resources like college network, family members, companies and employees to apply for an internship.
5. You should apply early for internships e.g., If you need a summer internship then you should start applying from month of January.
6. You should be accustomed to Professional English(written) and Professional English(spoken) so that it's easier for you to communicate with employees.

The most difficult job in the whole process is '**finding an internship**.' So now, we'll talk about some of the best websites in India where you'll find enough internship opportunities for yourself:

1. Internshala: It is one of the **biggest internship platform in India**with 1.5 million students and 40,000 companies(in 2017). The website is quite clean and user-friendly and has variety of options for students to filter the internships like category, location, work from, and duration. Apart from it, Internshala have options for students those who want to be involved in training. Also, Internshala rolled out a feature of **'Student Partner'** in colleges to promote the brand in their colleges in exchange for some benefits. Internshala Alexa Global Rank: 5689 Internshala and Alexa India Rank: 508
2. Letsintern: Another popular internship platform founded in Gurgaon, India in the year 2010. They have specialities in Internships, Interns, Youth Marketing, Recruitment, Hiring, Talent Acquisition, and Career tips. They boasts of 280,000 unique students visit us per month and 12,000 organizations like Uber, Viber, Dell,

Pepsi, HCL, Adidas, P&G, Flipkart, Zomato, Airtel, TOI, Outlook India. Internshala Alexa Global Rank: 34,134 Internshala and Alexa India Rank: 2457

3. Intern Hunt by Skillenza: Intern Hunt showcases the **best student programmers every 15 days** from all across the country. It's a place for programmers to compete and get ahead. Geek out over our fantastic challenges, and get recognized by the best in the industry like OYO Rooms, Elanic, Liv.ai, Buyhatke, Narvar, Kuvera, Edureka, Verloop, Rapido, LivLush, JustNV, Monexo, Shortlist, Theaanya, Cbetter, Monk AI, My Captain, Intutel, Helicalinsight, Outdo Inc, http://Code.ae, Pixo, Verismar, Pernser Analytics, Homepage, Sellulose and Ithaka.

4. Twenty19: is a platform which gives students access to a gamut of opportunities. The opportunities range from internships in diverse roles to **scholarships, conferences and other student competitions** and events around the world. Twenty19 exists to educate and enable students to take more initiatives. It was founded in the year 2009 and the headquarters are in Chennai, India. They have specialities in Internships, Online Courses, College Events, Workshops, and Symposiums. Twenty19 has Alexa Global Rank: 73,276 and Alexa India Rank: 5118

5. Youth4work: is a leader in assessments and skill based People Profiling. It is a platform which acts as a marketplace for Talent. With an exponentially growing base of **2.9 Million users** from 3500+ locations, 21600+ educational institute profiles, 14,000+ employers advertising more than 56,000 jobs, practice tests for 550+ competitive exams, 1500+ skill certification courses. Youth4work has Alexa Global Rank: 11,184 and Alexa India Rank: 768

6. HelloIntern: It was founded in the year 2006 and its headquarters are located Hyderabad, Telangana with an aim is to bring the concept of **internship/apprenticeship** to the centre stage as it is a crucial bridge in the development of our society. HelloIntern has Alexa Global Rank: 139,007 and Alexa India Rank: 11,343

7. **Let Me Know:** Let Me Know (http://www.letmeknow.in) is a web portal which covers latest internships, scholarships, competitions, conferences and events in the fields of Business, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts & Design and Maths & Sciences.

8. **Indeed.**com Indeed is an American worldwide employment-related search engine for job listings launched in November 2004

Social Media to find jobs

If you're a smart job searcher, you have probably researched everything there is to know about resumes, cover letters, interviews, and all of the other job-searching basics.

But you might not be as familiar with the newest technique for searching for jobs: social media.

Sure, most people know how to use social media in their personal lives, but it actually has a lot of power to make (or break) your job search. Studies have shown that 92% of companies are using social media for hiring—and that three out of four hiring managers will check out a candidate's social profiles.

So how can you tap into the power of social media (and avoid the pitfalls) to make searching for jobs easier? We've gathered all the tips you need to use every platform out there to your advantage.

General Social Media Job Search Tips

1. Get Everything Squeaky Clean

We hope you know this one already, but we have to mention it. Make sure any public information on your various profile is super clean.

2. Don't Have an Account on Everything

Being "active on social media" doesn't mean opening an account on every platform possible. Quite the opposite in fact! It's much better to have a well-crafted, up-to-date account on one or two platforms than to have a bunch of accounts that haven't been touched in years. Every job seeker should have a LinkedIn account, and a Facebook or Twitter to show that you're a real person doesn't hurt.

3. Use Your Real Name

It can be tempting to pick a punchy nickname or handle when making your profiles but, as much as possible, use your real name. This both looks more professional and means that people will be able to find your profiles when they search for your name. If you have a common name or often go by a nickname, at least choose a consistent name you'll use across platforms, and try to have your real name somewhere on each account.

4. Keep Your Image Professional and Consistent

You should have a clear, friendly, recent, and appropriately professional image to use across all platforms. Not sure what "appropriately professional" means? Take a look around at what the people in your industry are wearing to see how competent, influential, and friendly your photo makes you look.

5. Get Your Personal Branding Down

In addition to a consistent name and consistent photo, you should have a consistent brand across your social platforms. You want people to know who you are, what you do, and where you're going. We could write (and, yes, have written!) entire articles about personal branding. If you don't know how to define yours yet, this is a good place to start.

6. Use Your Social Accounts as Jumping Off Points

A social media account should never live in isolation—it should link off to somewhere that people can learn more about you. On all your social media accounts, make sure to include a link to the projects you're working on from current jobs or past jobs, your personal website, your blog, or anywhere else someone could learn more about you.

7. Bring All Your Accounts Together in One Place

Conversely, make sure there's a central hub where you can collect all of your various presences around the web. A personal website or landing page is a great option, or you could simply make sure to link to them all from your LinkedIn profile. Doing this will mean that whenever hiring managers or potential contacts search for you on social media for potential jobs, they can easily find all the profiles you want them to see.

8. And Put Them on Your Job Search Materials

Your social media profiles are now a great representation of who you are and where you're going, so make sure they're out there! Put your Twitter handle on your resume, mention your industry-specific network in your cover letter, and tell people where to find you on your business card or your email signature. If you've done the work to make them good and professional, don't be shy about sharing them!

9. Don't Use it for Professional Communications

While it's okay to promote your professional social media profiles in your materials when searching for jobs, don't use it for job-search related communications. In other words, you shouldn't be badgering companies you're applying to on Facebook or following up with recruiters after an interview on Twitter.

10. Use Scheduling Tools to Stay on Top of Things

Worried you won't remember to update your social profiles regularly? There are plenty of tools out there that will allow you to schedule, get ahead, share things directly from your browser, and hardly have to think about keeping an active social presence. Buffer is one of our favorites, but there are plenty of others out there.

LinkedIn Tips

11. Get Your Profile Up to Snuff

Before you can really start networking on LinkedIn, you want to make sure your profile is the strongest it can be—that way you look seriously impressive as you're connecting with new people and looking at new jobs. If you feel like yours still needs some work, check out our tips for LinkedIn profile success.

12. Come Up With a Plan

We know—very few people check LinkedIn every day in the same way they check Facebook or Twitter, but it's beneficial when searching for jobs to be updating it fairly regularly. To help keep yourself on track, come up with a plan for how often you'll interact with LinkedIn. To help, career expert Lily Zhang has come up with a list of what you should be doing every day, week, and month on LinkedIn. Put it on your calendar if you have to!

13. (Mostly) Only Connect With People You Know

For the most part, you should only send people requests to connect on LinkedIn if you've interacted with them in some other way before—whether you worked together at previous jobs, met at a networking event last night, or sent an email back and forth. There are, of course, a few exceptions to this rule, such as if it's someone in the industry you're interested in that you're seeking an informational interview with or it's someone you'd really, really like to work with. If you are reaching out to a stranger, just make sure you...

14. Send Personalized Messages to Anyone You Don't Know

Any time you add someone new on LinkedIn, it sends them the generic "I'd like to add you on LinkedIn" script. This isn't ideal, but it's okay for people who are familiar with you. But if you're reaching out cold to someone you'd like to meet? You should personalize that invitation to give context as to why you're reaching out. LinkedIn has, oddly, made this more difficult to do, but if you go to said person's profile and click the little arrow by "send InMail," you can choose to personalize the invitation. To read more about how to do this—and what to say—check out Herman's advice for reaching out to someone you admire on LinkedIn.

15. Just Don't Connect With the Hiring Manager

At least not until a decision has been made. Former Muser, Elliott Bell explains: "[The hiring manager] is interviewing not only you, but many others, trying to determine who will be the best person for the job and the company. Connecting over LinkedIn before a decision has been made can come off as both pushy and over-confident—like you're certain that you'll be the one who's working closely with the interviewer over all those other candidates." And if you don't get the job? Then it's okay to connect with the interviewer (sending a nice, professional note, of course!)—you know, in case something comes up.

16. Don't Forget the Groups!

For many, groups are kind of the weird underbelly of LinkedIn; everyone knows they exist, most people are members of at least some, but very few people actively use them. If you're a job-seeker, it's time to change that! Joining groups can really help you connect with new professionals (in a more natural way than just coldly reaching out) and get more engaged with discussions in your industry.

17. Up Your LinkedIn SEO

As a job seeker on LinkedIn, the best thing that can happen is that a recruiter or hiring manager finds *you* and reaches out. So you should be doing everything you can to attract them to your profile! In this article, Zhang walks you through the steps of making your profile more findable, clickable, and likable—making you more hirable. (Hint: A stellar headline and carefully selected keywords are, well, key.)

18. *Actually* Connect With People You Don't Know

Whether you reached out to them cold, they reached out to you, or you met in a group, you've now connected on LinkedIn with someone you've never interacted with in real life. Now what? The next—and most important—step, explains career expert Adrian J. Hopkins, is to actually connect with that person. Hop on a phone call, agree to meet up for coffee, or just send a few messages back and forth: Whatever it is, getting to know this stranger a little will make this connection really worth something—not just another number in your count.

19. Reconnect With People You Do Know

You know you should be staying in touch with your network. But it takes a lot of time! So use LinkedIn to make it a little easier on yourself. Did an old colleague just post that she got a new job? Comment to send her a congratulations! Did someone you met at an event just post a great article he wrote? Write back giving your thoughts on the piece. It's a small gesture from you, but it will help keep you top-of-mind.

20. Tap Into Your Connections—Without Annoying Them

We all know you can use LinkedIn to see mutual connections between you and someone you're hoping to meet—meaning theoretically you could have that person intro you. But you don't want to annoy your contacts by asking for intros too often or assuming they'd be willing to help you out (especially if you, um, don't actually know them that well). Former Muse editor-in-chief Adrian Granzella Larssen has some ideas for how to ask for intros the right way.

21. Keep Your Search Under the Radar

Unless you're very publicly job searching (i.e., you don't currently have a job), you don't exactly want people to see all your activity on LinkedIn. And while your job-searching activity (such as viewing companies or applying to jobs) is automatically private, it would still look pretty fishy if your network saw that you suddenly updated everything in your profile. So, when you're editing your profile, look down the right sidebar until you see the "Notify your network?" section, and flip the button to "off."

22. Hack Your Insights Graph

You know that little graph you can see when you click on how many people have viewed your profile in the past week? Not only can you see how many people checked you out (and, in some cases, who), you can see how many actions you made in a given week. Zhang explains the value of this data: "That's great news for users who are trying to figure out what increases profile engagement. Now, when you tweak your LinkedIn strategy, you can gauge how well it's working by seeing who you're attracting to your profile with each change."

Facebook Tips

23. Don't Hide Your Whole Profile

While it is advisable to keep most of your Facebook profile restricted to friends and family, some parts of it should be viewable by the public if you're searching for jobs. After all, employers will search for you on there to learn more about you, so you should have some information to show that you're a normal, real person. We advise restricting most of your photos, wall posts, likes, and personal "About Me" info like relationship status, but keeping your main photo public (and professional), along with your employment and educational info.

24. Make Professional Status Updates Public

Are you sharing a link to an article you had published on an industry blog? An update about a new milestone you helped your company achieve? An announcement about an activity you're participating in that shows some of your personality? We often post these on our Facebook for the support and excitement of our friends, but consider making some of them public. That way, when a recruiter does land on your social media page, he or she will see some activity and can learn a little more about you for potential jobs. We often think about it this way: If you would post it on your professional Twitter, consider making it a public Facebook post.

25. "Like" the Companies You Love

Have companies you know you'd really love to work for? "Like" their Facebook pages! By doing this, you can get daily updates about their activity—giving you talking points for an interview and potentially alerting you to openings for jobs. Plus, there's a chance that smaller companies will check to see if you're a fan on Facebook, just to gauge how excited you really are about the job. Doing this definitely can't hurt.

26. Consider Letting Your Connections Know You're Searching

If you're publicly job searching (a.k.a. don't currently have a job) or if you *know* that your Facebook connections don't include any co-workers or people who might relay information back to your boss, it could be worth posting a status update letting your connections know you're on the hunt. Referrals are still one of the best ways to land a job, and your friends and family are going to be more wont to help you than that person you talked to once at a networking event—you never know who they know. Just be extra careful with this one: If there's any chance word could get back to someone you work with, don't do this. When in doubt, send an email blast or Facebook message to the people you know you can trust instead. Learn more on asking your network for help here.